

CLAIMS

1. A stylet for use with an endotracheal tube having an articulating tip; the stylet comprising:

an elongated immalleable rod having a diameter that is less than the inner diameter of said tube and having a length that is shorter than said tube.

2. The stylet recited in claim 1 wherein said rod is shaped to conform to the curvature of said tube.

3. The stylet recited in claim 1 further comprising a limiting device affixed to the proximal end of said rod for engaging the proximal end of said tube to limit the insertion of said rod into said tube.

4. The stylet recited in claim 3 wherein said limiting device is shaped for grasping by at least one finger of a human hand.

5. The stylet recited in claim 1 wherein said rod has a distal end having an enlargement.

6. The stylet recited in claim 1 wherein said rod has a distal end which is flattened.

7. The stylet recited in claim 1 wherein said rod has a bent distal end tip.

8. The stylet recited in claim 1 wherein said rod has a uniform straight shape over most of its length.

9. The stylet recited in claim 1 wherein said rod has a diameter which is in the range of 2 mm to 11 mm.

10. The stylet recited in claim 1 wherein said rod is made of biocompatible polymer.

11. In combination with an endotracheal tube having an articulable distal portion for manipulation during insertion into an airway, a stylet for insertion into the tube to rigidize the tube along the tube length not including the articulable distal portion; the stylet comprising:

an elongated, shape-retaining, semi-rigid rod having a diameter smaller than the inner diameter of said tube and having a length that is shorter than said tube.

12. The stylet recited in claim 11 wherein said rod is shaped to conform to the curvature of said tube.

13. The stylet recited in claim 11 further comprising a limiting device affixed to the proximal end of said rod for engaging the proximal end of said tube to limit the insertion of said rod into said tube.

14. The stylet recited in claim 13 wherein said limiting device is shaped for grasping by at least one finger of a human hand.

15. The stylet recited in claim 11 wherein said rod has a distal end having an enlargement.

16. The stylet recited in claim 11 wherein said rod has a distal end which is flattened.

17. The stylet recited in claim 11 wherein said rod has a bent distal end tip.

18. The stylet recited in claim 11 wherein said rod has a uniform straight shape over most of its length.

19. The stylet recited in claim 11 wherein said rod has a diameter which is in the range of 2 mm to 11 mm.

20. The stylet recited in claim 11 wherein said rod is made of biocompatible polymer.

21. The stylet recited in claim 11 wherein the length of said rod is selected to permit the distal end of said stylet to be proximate said articulable distal portion of said tube when the proximal end of said rod is substantially aligned with the proximal end of said tube.